



BRITISH AND CANADIAN CITIZENS

— IN THE —

UNITED STATES.

From the "Canadian-American," Chicago, Sept. 23rd, 1887.

To the Editor of the CANADIAN-AMERICAN, SIR:—Canada hears with interest, and it may be safely added with pleasure, that it is the determination of Canadians and Englishmen settled in the United States, who have hitherto declined naturalization or stood aloof from politics, to naturalize, to become active citizens of their adopted country, and thus to obtain a fair position in the Republic for the men of their race and due influence for the Canadian and British vote.

It is not to be desired that Canadians and Englishmen should prefer politics to honest industry, and fill the commonwealth with a swarm of grog-shop politicians, turning public life, the highest of all callings, into the lowest of all trades. Canada and Great Britain have reason to be proud that their sons, instead of becoming wirepullers, bosses, repeaters, and ballot-stuffers, prefer to make their livelihood by honorable means, and are distinguished as citizens only by their loyalty to the common weal and their reverence for the law. But political self-effacement is a mistake. Abstention from political activity has brought on

Canadians and English in the United States not only impotence but disrespect and actual contumely. The origin, the language, the institutions of the Republic are British, and British is almost every name of high distinction in her annals. Yet it is hardly possible to take up an American journal or to listen to an American debate without reading or hearing something insulting to the British race and name. I have heard a member of Congress, one of the better and more high-minded class, deplore the foul and calumnious invectives against the Mother Country to which he is compelled to listen. These are tributes paid by the cowardice and hypocrisy of journalists and the politicians to the sinister activity of the Irish in politics, the clanishness with which they hold together, and the concentrated force with which their vote is wielded by their bosses and their priests. The tribute will cease to be paid when there is not only an Irish but a Canadian and a British vote. By reasonable self-assertion in the political sphere you redeem not only yourselves from degradation, but the Republic from self-abasement.

Worse than political contumely may possibly be the consequences of abstention. Canadians and Englishmen may some day find themselves involved, and perhaps called upon as citizens to serve, in an unrighteous war against the Mother Country, brought on by the sycophancy of journalists and politicians who, to gratify Irish malignity, traduce and bully Great Britain. The Republic would not go into such a war with her eyes open; but it is not with their eyes open that nations are led into unnecessary and unjust wars.

At all events, so long as the British element is politically down-trodden, Anglo-Saxon immigration, whether from Great Britain or Canada, will be repelled ; and this will be disastrous to the United States. It is in the Anglo-Saxon race mainly that the habits and traditions of self-government reside ; it is from the men of that race that the other races settled in the United States have received their education in republican citizenship ; and the great danger of the Republic at present, confessedly, is the excessive dilution of this element by the increasing inflow of foreign elements drawn from countries where the people have undergone no political training and are not a law to themselves. One of the bad consequences of the Anglo-Saxon schism in the last century, as it has always seemed to me, was the diversion to Australia of the Anglo-Saxon emigration which is needed to re-inforce the self-governing and truly republican element here. At this juncture, when foreign Anarchism polls so many votes under its own flag, the political self-effacement of Anglo-Saxon immigrants will be doubly injurious to the Republic.

If, as I see stated, there is something in the formulary of naturalization specially distasteful to Englishmen and Canadians as bearing traces of the old revolutionary quarrel, this surely cannot be more than a technicality, such as ought not to be allowed to interfere with the acceptance of a great practical advantage. It is jurisdiction that is renounced and not affection. The removal of anything that may be offensive in the formulary would probably be the first fruit of the increased influence of the British and Canadian vote.

If that affection for England, which I most heartily share, is felt by any American citizen of British race as a bar to a change of allegiance, let him remember that the worst of all tributes which can be offered to the Mother Country is the political impotence of her friends.

Into anything like conspiracy, cabal, or anti-national organization, it is to be hoped that British and Canadian Americans will never allow themselves to be drawn. If they ever act in unison as a race, let it be only in self-defence and for the purpose of repelling contumely and wrong, as their kinsmen are beginning to find it necessary to do on this side of the line. Their paramount duty, as they well know, is that of American citizens bound to exercise their political power for the good of the Republic as a whole, and without regard to distinctions of race or creed. But as American citizens they have a right to equality; they have a right to immunity from political insult; they have a right to security against being misgoverned, and still more against being dragged into unrighteous quarrels with their Mother Country in the alien interest of an Irish feud; and in asserting those rights they will only be doing what true loyalty and patriotism dictate toward their adopted country,

Yours faithfully,

GOLDWIN SMITH.

TORONTO, Sept. 17th, 1887.

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